



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

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JON S. CORZINE
Governor

www.nj.gov/health

HEATHER HOWARD
Commissioner

January 16, 2009

Re: Comments on Proposed US DHHS Regulation "Provider Conscience Regulation"

Dear Colleague:

I wanted to let you know that Governor Corzine has directed New Jersey to join Connecticut and five other state attorneys general in filing suit in federal court yesterday, January 15, 2008, seeking to block the implementation of the "Provider Conscience Regulation" by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. The regulation is set to take effect January 20, 2009 and the lawsuit seeks an immediate injunction to block its implementation. I have enclosed a newspaper article about the lawsuit.

As you know, the regulation would restrict access to vital reproductive health services and information for millions of women in New Jersey and across the nation. New Jersey opposed this rule last fall in a formal comment letter, and I wrote to you at the time about my concerns for the public health.

I know you share my concern about the impact this rule would have on a wide range of health care services including abortion, family planning, and end-of-life care. The regulation would allow health care providers to refuse to perform any service they deem morally objectionable, and is so broad that it could be interpreted to apply to any employee at a medical facility.

I encourage you to join me in making your voices heard in opposition to this attack against women's access to reproductive health services in the final hours of the outgoing administration in Washington.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Heather Howard".

Heather Howard
Commissioner